6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
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him outside the range of the magic influence which had reduced him to such a hideous condition. But evidently they had only escaped the Samatari magic to fall straight into another, which was too much for the sick child. He died, sacrificed in a duel between two magic powers.

VI

The great 'provisioning-march' of the Samatari now began. We went along with them. We were prisoners, we were guests, we were tolerated visitors—a bit of everything. The main body, with the women and children, led the way along a track that was years old and had been opened up again the day before by the younger members of the tribe, who possessed the one metal weapon used by the Samatari: a piece of a knife-blade stuck into a stick and firmly bound with bark soaked in vegetable gum. What story could this scrap of steel have told when it finally reached the headwaters of the Aracoa!

The track was by no means straight, but for all its meanderings led vaguely towards the south-east. It lay for the most part through the dense thickets of fruit-bearing trees, which probably harboured other sorts of foodstuffs of which we knew nothing. The main body arrived to find that the young men had already picked nuts and fruit of all kinds and made piles of them at the foot of the trees. All the women had to do was take them up.

When meat of any sort is found and killed on these occasions, a couple of youngsters stay behind with it. They sling a hammock and light a fire and watch while it is slowly smoking on the spit. When the women come up, they pull off pieces of the flesh, put them into the rough hampers they carry on their shoulders and go on with the march, their babies jogging up and down on their backs, tied there with a strap made of bark. Some, like peripatetic vestal virgins, take fire with them, in the form of glowing brands, blowing on them as they go along lest the embers should grow cold. Thus the march of the Samatari leaves a trail of nutshells, rinds, ash, and little bits of charcoal. It suggests not so much an ordinary nomadic people on the move but rather a very special tribe composed of itinerant cooks.

With evening, or strictly speaking some time before the end of the afternoon, we found ourselves in a vast clearing where all the small plants, shrubs, bushes and grass had been cut away and swept and raked aside. All round this

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
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open space ran a belt of rattan palms with their notoriously dangerous black spines. There were just two openings: a way in, and a way out. This was a defence work against any enemy that might come along. An aggressor had little chance of bringing off a surprise attack against the Samatari over this open ground, and if he made a frontal attack he would find 'bread for his teeth'—that is, thorns for his feet.

At night, while the Indians were all chattering heedlessly in their hammocks or sleeping the light sleep of the savage, the two gaps in the cordon were closed and the camp became a fortress difficult to storm. If they stay for several days in one place, as sometimes happens during the rainy season when they are visiting their plantations of tobacco and cane (for arrows), they will put up a palisade round the camp, on the Guayca model. This is composed of the trunks of a very tough palm, driven into the ground as close together as possible. Thus entrenched they can withstand whole days of attack from a position of strength.

In the course of our march, one Samatari not only devoured the larvae of bees, neatly excavating them from their cells in the smoked honeycomb, but every now and then he would stop at a dead tree-trunk, seamed with ant-galleries or lanes, and run his thumb and forefinger along the groove as far as possible, pressing out the damp earthy substance, which he conveyed to his mouth like some rare *bonne bouche*. Smacking his lips, he carried on until he had demolished the whole network of these arboreal thoroughfares, and the ants fled away over the surface of the tree-trunk, lamenting the cataclysm that had overtaken them.

Even we tried this ant-hill diet, but a mixture of earth and sawdust hardly appeased our hunger. Sometimes, as we crossed a stream, a few of the Samatari bent down rapidly and picked out of the water some little white stones that were soft like lumps of lime. These they chewed as they went along, apparently swallowing them. They will also eat sand, the dirty, soft, vari-coloured sand which is found with the detritus of vegetable matter thrown up on the banks of a river after a flood. For on top of all this varied diet of theirs, the Samatari are also geophagists—earth-eaters. The reason for this is probably an instinctive prompting which leads them to acquire in this way the minerals their normal food—which they eat without salt or spices—does not supply.

Our great salvation was the fruit: meat being very precious to the savages, they were unwilling to give us any, and we had no means of hunting for ourselves. The gun had simply disappeared. For the Samatari too, fruit is the main

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
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bath like this—we had never seen him take one before—seemed to prove the point.

Between the sandstone of the high plateau and the usual granite of this region there was here an unexpected intermediary layer white with kaolin. After another hour of hard going we once more found ourselves in the lush vegetation of the lowlands. To the left of the track at one point, in a cavity formed by the collapse of a big tree whose roots had been torn out of the earth, we found the light baggage carried here and stowed the day before. It was apparently unharmed, even if literally covered with a revolting army of termites. We had the packs taken out of the hole (with the greatest caution for fear of a hidden snake), piled them all up together and covered them with palm leaves—because now the Indians didn't seem to be in any hurry to cover more mileage that day, nor did they lift a finger to start putting up the usual shelter for the night.

The baggage was untouched: the possibility of seeing our expedition through to the end was therefore open to us once more. Such a satisfactory state of affairs filled us with enthusiasm, and we decided to sacrifice no less than four tins of corned beef. We shared it out among the porters. This extra meal put some heart into the Indians, and picking up their machetes again they beckoned us to follow them along the track once more, where it veered to the south, through the forest. We could make out from their gestures that we were close to the heart of the great mystery now, and so took plenty of ammunition with us in case we should need it. The gradient stiffened. The track turned to the right, into a thick maze of wild banana and thorny iriarteae, and then through a little swamp where there were numerous prints of bare feet, to end up in front of a stockade of thorny palm, freshly piled up for some defensive purpose.

A sweet, heavy smell hung in the air—the typical smell of an Indian camp after it has been abandoned for a few days, which comes from rotting remains of meat and game, and decaying vegetable matter. The barrier of thorny palm was an insuperable obstacle for bare Indian feet. We followed it along to the right till we found a break, half hidden by a few tree-trunks, which led us inside the camp. At first sight it seemed no different from the usual Samatari pattern. Here and there—all over the place, in fact—were piles of ashes and vegetable refuse of all kinds. But this encampment had one particular feature which, although the conscious part of our minds missed it at first, made us feel

/475 cont./

726 booty without being discovered, because if they were, they would generally have to abandon the prisoner and flee in order to save their lives.

If the invading band is large, that is to say, made up of several settlements, it might be sufficiently strong to attack all of a full settlement. If an entire settlement can be put into disordered flight, many of the women and girls are easy prey for the attackers. Girls between 12 and 18 years of age are regarded as the best booty. It is almost certain that some of the men, especially of the settlement being attacked, will lose their lives or be wounded in the attack. Not always are women the only booty; every kind of object of value is abandoned in the hasty retreat. Such raids do not occur very frequently, but their possibility keeps the population in constant fear of them.

727 After having thus been attacked, the settlement can decide to abandon the entire area and found a new "conuco" in another area, or all of the friendly settlements might be called on to help in the reprisal raids.

● 712 726 When the enemy camps near a settlement at a distance closer than usual, or if there is some other reason to fear a raid, stockades or palisades are built. Posts and poles about 15 centimeters in diameter and two or more meters in length are tied in a vertical position, closing off all the approaches, particularly the pathways. Palm leaves and weeds are piled up against these walls to prevent the enemy from looking through the interstices. On the outside of these palisades, for a distance of 30 to 50 meters, all the trees are cut and left lying in thick underbrush as one more obstacle for the enemy intruders. Furthermore, under the eaves, at the back part of each and every house, they make an additional wall of sticks of firewood longer than usual. Should an attack occur, the women and children throw themselves against these walls of firewood in the back of the houses, while the men take their defensive positions and shout vigorous war cries, making their bows rattle in order to impress the enemy with their number and preparation.

9:Grelier K-5 (1951) 1957 SQ18 Yanoama SQ 18
Waica

But ibis in immense droves refused to be disturbed as they covered each new sandbank that was born.

The water was as clear as if it had been filtered, its reflection of the sun blinding. Dark patches of smooth water amid the rippled surface elsewhere betrayed the next sandbanks to uncover.

We left behind the Padamo, Ocamo and the Mavaca, and all the time the river got narrower. We passed the nights on great flat platforms of rock which got larger as the water went down; with machetes we killed fish trapped in the rocky pools left by the receding stream. A dish of ananas and fish, half-soup, half-stew, is very tasty. It is called *sancoco* and from now on became our staple diet.

From Esmeralda we had brought supplies of sugar, coffee, salt, some oil and four big baskets of *manioc* from which we made coarse bread at all hours of the day. Several times we saw fresh water turtles clinging to the rocks and once or twice succeeded in catching one. But they are wily creatures and usually they dived before we could get near them. One we caught was handicapped by an injured foot which the men asserted was the work of a caribe. Unfortunately, it was too early for the females to be laying their eggs in the sand—they would have been manna, indeed.

We arrived at Platanal on November 21st to find that the bridge had been cut down and learned that this had been deliberately done "for strategic reasons". The Indians greeted us like old friends and unhesitatingly took us to the village. There we found feverish activity on all sides. A boy had been kidnapped from the plantation and another killed by an arrow through the chest. The corpse had been cremated amid ritual weeping and the ashes stored by the family in an urn sealed by wax. Not until the death had been avenged could they be mixed with the dust of the lad's ancestors.

The men had strengthened and consolidated the fortified enclosure and cut down the screen of trees round the village. Sentries had been posted and the entry through the fortification had been concealed by palm-leaves. Women were

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

men built his own section of the village, but in such a way that the roofs coincided and could be attached by simply extending the thatching. When completed, the village looked like a continuous, oval-shaped lean-to because of the way in which the roofs of the discrete houses were attached. Each house, however, is owned by the family that built it. Sharaiwä, Kąobawä's youngest brother, helped build Kąobawä's house and shares it with him. He also shares Koamashima, Kąobawä's younger wife. Kąobawä's older wife, Bahimi, hangs her hammock adjacent to Kąobawä's most of the time, but when there are visitors and the village is crowded, she ties her hammock under his in order to be able to tend the fire during the night. Ariwari still sleeps with his mother, but will get his own hammock soon: He is nearly four years old. His parents are afraid he will fall into the fire at night and get burned, since he is still a little too young to sleep alone.[21]

Daily activities begin early in a Yąnomamö village. One can hear people chatting lazily and children crying long before it is light enough to see. Most people are waked by the cold and build up the fire just before daybreak. They usually go back to sleep, but many of them visit and talk about their plans for the day.

The entrances are all covered with dry brush so that any movement of people through them is heard all over the village. There is always a procession of people leaving the village at dawn to relieve themselves in the nearby garden, and the noise they make going in and out of the village usually awakens the others.

The village is very smoky at this time of day, since the newly stoked campfires smoulder before they leap into flames. The air is usually very still and chilly, and the ground is damp from the dew. The smoke is pleasant and seems to drive away the coolness.

Clandestine sexual liasons usually take place at this time of day, having been arranged on the previous evening. The lovers leave the village on the pretext of going to the bathroom and meet at some predetermined location. They return to the village by opposite routes.

This is also the time of day when raiders strike, so people must be cautious when they leave the village at dawn. If there is some reason to suspect raiders, they do not leave the confines of the upright log palisade that surrounds the village. They wait instead until full light and leave the village in armed groups.

By the time it is light enough to see, everybody has started preparing breakfast. This consists largely of roasted green plantains, easily prepared and steaming hot. If the family has any meat, it is taken down and shared, the children getting the best portions. Leftover meat is hung over the fire by a vine to keep the vermin off it and to preserve it.

If any of the men have made plans to hunt that day, they leave the village before it is light. Wild turkeys can be easily taken at this time of day because they roost in conspicuous places. During the dry season the *bashimo* (a kind of grouse) sing before dark and can be readily located. If any were heard the night before, the men leave at dawn to stalk them.

Tobacco chewing starts as soon as people begin stirring. Those who have fresh

[21] A child fell into a fire and burned to death in 1966—the mother had placed her hammock too close to the fire in order to keep warm, and the baby slipped from her arms while she slept. Bahimi's mother also sleeps in Kąobawä's house, but he does not have to avoid her because she is an old woman.